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THE GATEWAY CITIES COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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The members of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments.

The Gateway Cities Council of Governments (GCCOG) was established to encourage cooperation among the cities of Southeast Los Angeles County, advocate on their behalf for common issues of importance, and serve as a forum for the discussion and formation of public policies and plans of regional significance. The member cities of the GCCOG include:

Artesia	Downey	Montebello
Avalon	Hawaiian Gardens	Norwalk
Bell	Huntington Park	Paramount
Bellflower	La Habra Heights	Pico Rivera
Bell Gardens	Lakewood	Santa Fe Springs
Cerritos	La Mirada	Signal Hill
Commerce	Long Beach	South Gate
Compton	Lynwood	Vernon
Cudahy	Maywood	Whittier

The efforts of the GCCOG to address the issues facing its member cities have focused in two areas, transportation and economic development. In addition to promoting the economic development of the area and developing a regional transportation plan, the GCCOG has also assisted with regional efforts to improve air quality, as well as working on sub-regional planning and data base management.

THE GATEWAY CITIES:

A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The decline of manufacturing since 1988, particularly in the area of aerospace and defense industries, has had a major impact on the local economies of the region. The Gateway Cities have historically been Southern California's manufacturing base. As defense-linked industries have downsized, no other industry has risen to take its place in terms of local job creation.

The failure of the region to improve its transportation network has also contributed to decline in the manufacturing sector, as businesses relocate to other, more accessible areas. The Alameda Corridor, a 20-mile rail connection between the Southeastern Los Angeles ports and downtown Los Angeles, represents one effort at improving the transportation infrastructure in the region.

The GCCOG sponsored the development of a set of *Performance Indicators for the Gateway Cities Subregion*, a report measuring a range of social, economic, and environmental indicators for the Gateway Cities. Based on these indicators, the area currently enjoys a relatively low crime rate (a statistic that is reflective of a state and nationwide decline in criminal activity). Housing is more affordable than throughout the rest of Southern California. Land uses have changed little in the past 20 years, and the majority of land throughout the member cities remains dominated by low-density residential and industrial uses. The report, intended to be updated annually, also identified several trends for the region. These include an increase in population, a decline in employment levels, (although this is expected to reverse for this year), and a steady increase in residential building, particularly in the number of single-family housing starts.

A review of market conditions in the area suggests that demand for residential development is currently on the rise, as the population of the region continues to grow. Demand for Class A industrial space remains high despite the shrinking of the aerospace industry. Because of the region's strategic location between central Los Angeles and the port of Long Beach, it continues to play a key role in the distribution of goods throughout Southern California, resulting in continued demand for warehouse and distribution space in support of port activities. However, warehouse and distribution are generally not favored by many cities, as they are relatively low value uses utilizing few employees and featuring poor visual character.

RECENT PROGRAMS

Economic Strategy Initiative

In response to regional economic upheaval caused by a changing economy, decline in manufacturing and loss of jobs, the Gateway Cities Council of Governments commissioned the preparation of the *Gateway Cities Economic Strategy Initiative* in 1996. This report focused on strategies that would foster regional participation in the global economy, and its recommendations included workforce improvement through training and development, the reuse and redevelopment of former industrial sites for more relevant uses, an increase in port activity, and a continued focus on growth in the manufacturing industry. As a result of this partnership, the Gateway Cities Partnership, Inc., was founded to act as the regional economic collaborative for the twenty-seven member cities and to promote the strategy initiative.

Regional Transportation Plan (20-Year Plan)

In 1999, GCCOG investigated progressive means of meeting transportation needs and improving the conditions of the area through the development of a *Strategic Transportation Investment Portfolio*. An analysis of regional infrastructure needs identified several major programmatic initiatives for the region, including movement of freight, public transit, better pedestrian environments, signal synchronization, corridor improvement and public safety. The portfolio summary prioritized the transportation needs of the region over the next twenty years, and identified the resources needed to meet future goals.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

CASE STUDIES

Purpose of Case Studies

In the summer of 1999, in partnership with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), the GCCOG sponsored three *Livable Places Profiles*. The case studies of the cities of Signal Hill, Santa Fe Springs, and Paramount highlighted the efforts of each municipality to transform their city into a more livable place, through initiatives directed toward industrial, commercial, and residential development. These profiles were presented as an opportunity for all GCCOG members to learn to enhance their quality of life by learning from the accomplishments of other cities.

As a further effort towards enhancing livability in Southeast Los Angeles County, the GCCOG, again in cooperation with SCAG, is sponsoring the case studies found in this report. These case studies are intended to demonstrate the possibilities of creating a livable community through strategies of *downtown revitalization, reuse of industrial lands, and streetscape improvements to arterial corridors*. The alternatives and recommendations given in each case study are specific to the issues faced by that particular location; however, it is hoped that the lessons learned from these case studies can be utilized by all member cities facing similar challenges. Serving to showcase a variety of effective redevelopment and revitalization strategies, the recommendations presented in this report offer ideas and approaches that are intended to be useful to all of the Gateway Cities.

Process of Case Studies

The first step taken by the consultants was the facilitation of an input and orientation workshop with the general GCCOG membership. The workshop highlighted the general types of urban issues faced by modern communities and demonstrated successful techniques that address those issues (a video of that workshop is available from GCCOG). In particular, the workshop focused on existing examples of how high quality urban design interventions have resulted in increased economic activity and civic revitalization.

Background research for the project examined at the regional context of the Gateway Cities, as well as the specific case study sites. Several documents produced for the GCCOG were reviewed in the creation of this report, including *The Gateway Cities Economy: Impacts of Aerospace Restructuring*, February 1998; *Gateway Cities Economic Strategy Initiative*, 1996; and the *Regional Transportation Plan*, 1999. Documents produced for the individual cities were also reviewed, including the *Pioneer Specific Plan* for Artesia, July 2000; the *Preliminary Plan for the Artesia Redevelopment Project Area*, February 2000; the *Paramount General Plan*, October 1990; the *Paramount Redevelopment Plan* (amended in 1980); the *Pico Rivera Specific Plan 301*, February 1996; and the *Rancho de Bartolo Specific Plan* for Pico Rivera, December 1997.

In summer 2000, urban design consultants carried out field research in the case study Cities of Artesia, Paramount and Pico Rivera. In order to identify urban design and development problems at the project areas, the consultants visited each of the three sites, performed an analysis of design context, urban form and existing development, and undertook a photographic inventory of conditions. Policy framework, market context, circulation, access, and patterns of change and development were reviewed. During the site visits, consultants also met with key personnel from each of the city staffs in order to understand community aspirations, and to review local political contexts as they relate to the study areas.

Based on the issues and context of each project, the design team summarized the principal issues faced by each of the case study areas, and developed urban design and redevelopment recommendations for each individual site. This report presents an evaluation of these issues, and examines the urban design and redevelopment possibilities of each project area in Artesia, Pico Rivera, and Paramount. The final proposals are presented as a revitalization plan or urban design concept diagram for each project site, in some cases with alternatives. Further development of the design options will rest in the hands of the cities; each municipality will have the option of pursuing the recommended urban design vision. Taking the design process to the next level will involve further design and feasibility studies, and will most certainly require a series of community workshops so that the knowledge, concerns, and aspirations of stakeholders and residents can be identified to form the basis of final strategies and plans. In addition, the extent of available local resources (only guessed at within the limits of this study) will play a major role in determining the phasing and magnitude of actions ultimately approved by local City Councils.

As a final step, the ideas and recommendations provided in this report will be presented at a meeting of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments, to awaken the member cities to the possibilities of their region, and to explain and expand upon the ways in which these urban visions might be realized in the Gateway Cities. While the urban design

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recommendations presented in this report provide specific solutions for each area, they also demonstrate what is possible in the regional context of the Gateway Cities. It is hoped that the lessons learned from these case studies can be utilized by other Gateway Cities facing similar issues as they approach a new and changing economy.